

Bio – Jennifer Thompson-Cannino

Jennifer Thompson-Cannino, a native North Carolinian and mother of teenage triplets, has become an outspoken opponent on the death penalty and speaks frequently about the need for judicial reform. Her strong convictions were born of a brutal rape she suffered as a twenty-two year old college student. It was her compelling testimony in that case that sent a young man to prison, not once, but twice, for a crime he did not commit. That man, Ronald Cotton, was eventually freed thanks in large part to his persistence in proclaiming his innocence and the development of sophisticated DNA tests. Jennifer credits Ronald with teaching her the healing power of forgiveness and grace. Together they successfully lobbied state legislators to change compensation laws for the wrongly convicted. She is now a member of the Actual Innocence Commission, advisory committee for Active Voices, member of the Constitution Project and Mother's for Justice.